

## THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE—U.S. GRAND STRATEGY

BY

MR. ANDREW STEWART  
Department of Army Civilian

### DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:

Approved for Public Release.  
Distribution is Unlimited.

USAWC CLASS OF 2009

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.



U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle State Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. <b>PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.</b>					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 23-03-2009		2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Art of the Possible – U.S. Grand Strategy				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Mr. Andrew Stewart				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Dr. H.R. Yarger Department of National Security and Strategy				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT America is at a crossroad in its history. Termination of the Cold War, globalization, the global war on terror and the recent deterioration of U.S. financial markets have created a need and a unique opportunity for launching a new grand strategy. The events described above and the 2008 presidential campaigns have created an expectation for change within this country and abroad. The new administration could successfully leverage these expectations and adjust the course of the United States for the next 30 years or longer. This paper examines successful past grand strategies and the events which caused their consideration and eventual modification for insights to crafting strategy at the grand level. It explores potential grand strategies against the backdrop of current and potential strategic challenges and presents an outline of a new grand strategy for the United States.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Influence of Globalization, Alliances					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT  UNLIMITED	18. NUMBER OF PAGES  30	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)



USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE – U.S. GRAND STRATEGY**

by

Mr. Andrew Stewart  
Department of Army Civilian

Dr. H.R. Yarger  
Project Adviser

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

U.S. Army War College  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013



## **ABSTRACT**

AUTHOR: Mr. Andrew Stewart  
TITLE: The Art of the Possible – U.S. Grand Strategy  
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project  
DATE: 26 March 2008      WORD COUNT: 6183      PAGES: 30  
KEY TERMS: Influence of Globalization, Alliances  
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

America is at a crossroad in its history. Termination of the Cold War, globalization, the global war on terror and the recent deterioration of U.S. financial markets have created a need and a unique opportunity for launching a new grand strategy. The events described above and the 2008 presidential campaigns have created an expectation for change within this country and abroad. The new administration could successfully leverage these expectations and adjust the course of the United States for the next 30 years or longer. This paper examines successful past grand strategies and the events which caused their consideration and eventual modification for insights to crafting strategy at the grand level. It explores potential grand strategies against the backdrop of current and potential strategic challenges and presents an outline of a new grand strategy for the United States.





## THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE – U.S. GRAND STRATEGY

America is at a strategic crossroad in its history. Termination of the Cold War, globalization, the global war on terror and the recent deterioration of U.S. financial markets demonstrate the need for a comprehensive U.S. grand strategy. While the United States is and will remain a world leader, the events described above and the 2008 presidential campaigns have also created a global expectation and, thus, a strategic opportunity for grand change within this country and abroad. The new administration could successfully leverage these expectations and set a successful course for the United States for the next 30 years or longer. A grand strategy which builds on current U.S. power and lays a foundation for the advancement of the United States and its world partners is within the art of the possible. This paper proposes such a grand strategy to address U.S. national interests.

### Intellectual Templates

Grand strategy is defined as “the use of all elements of national power in peace and war to support a strategic vision of America’s role in the world that will best achieve the nation’s national objectives. All strategy is a calculation of ends, ways, and means.”<sup>1</sup> Four generally accepted intellectual templates in international relations for grand strategy are primacy, neo-isolationism, selective engagement and cooperative security.<sup>2</sup> An examination of these templates against a backdrop of current and potential strategic challenges and opportunities for U.S. interests is useful in determining a potential “best” grand strategy for the United States to pursue.

A grand strategy of primacy places the United States in the role of world dominator; an hegemony with little regard for the views of others in the international

community.<sup>3</sup> The end of the Cold War resulted in the United States being the sole remaining superpower and led some to believe that U.S. power was infinite. Presidents George H.W. Bush and William Jefferson Clinton supported this dominant position by making only minimal military reductions compared to their European allies following the implosion of the Soviet Union. President George W. Bush with his Doctrine (policy) of Preemption following the attacks of September 11, 2001, solidified the view of many that primacy was a viable U.S. grand strategic outlook.<sup>4</sup> Events following the invasion of Iraq have dampened the appeal of primacy but not the reality of the United States as a potential dominant world power. Economically and militarily the United States will maintain this unique position for the foreseeable future.

Neo-isolationism calls for a return to a long-standing sentiment that America should remain free of the “permanent alliances” which George Washington warned against in his farewell address to the nation.<sup>5</sup> These views are ingrained in historical and current public sentiment. Following the First World War, the United States was uniquely poised to lead a new international order but President Woodrow Wilson was unable to garner the public and political support necessary for United States entry into the League of Nations. The desire for isolation continued through the inter-war years and led President Franklin D. Roosevelt to use the Lend Lease Program as a means for supplying ships and material to the Europeans prior to Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>6</sup> The United States assumed its current role as world leader after World War II. The Breton Woods conference of 1944 set the stage for this leadership role and the Marshall Plan helped war ravaged nations, allies and former enemies, to recover and become joint members of the post-war international community.<sup>7</sup> Neo-isolationism, if adopted,

would result in the United States withdrawal from the World Bank, the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and other international regimes and alliances which the United States was instrumental in creating and nurturing. These institutions have shaped world economic growth and prosperity. In addition, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and other alliances created by the United States have been instrumental in maintaining security among the larger nations of the world. Withdrawal from these institutions would put the United States at an economic disadvantage and weaken global security. The 1950 National Security Council Report Number 68 (NSC 68) provided arguments against isolationism which remain valid today: "isolation would in the end condemn us to capitulate or to fight alone and...Americans would feel a deep sense of responsibility and guilt for having abandoned their former friends and allies."<sup>8</sup>

A selective engagement strategy seeks to maintain U.S. flexibility to pick and choose the conflicts in which it engages based on its own national interests. One could argue President Clinton's National Security Strategy was a form of selective engagement. Military engagements in Somalia, Haiti, the Balkans, the Middle East and Africa are examples of selective engagement by the Clinton administration based on U.S. interests, even though many of these interventions were in support of "humanitarian and other nontraditional" interests.<sup>9</sup> These engagements included troops on the ground, humanitarian aid missions, air patrols and air strikes.<sup>10</sup> Use of this approach risks reinforcing the perception of U.S. self interest at a time when leadership on the international scene is most required.

Cooperative security entails the collective actions of multiple states to produce and maintain security.<sup>11</sup> This strategy would draw the United States more closely into coalitions, bi-lateral and regional alliances and the greater international community. Coalitions would be formed to address short duration incidents or conflicts for which no formal alliance currently exists. Existing alliances would be broadened and new alliances formed to meet issues of longer duration. The United States would in all probability be asked to involve itself in matters of national interest to others more often than it would ask others for their assistance. U.S. military and economic power could become the de facto options of first choice by the international community. The drawback of cooperative security and the interaction between nations can be summarized as follows, "One country may support another's cause, but will never take it so seriously as it takes its own."<sup>12</sup>

The intellectual examination of the four strategic templates provided above demonstrates theoretical absolutes. Unfortunately, while a single template may appear to dominate a nation's grand strategy, in reality portions all the templates permeate any grand strategy.

### Role of Grand Strategy

Grand strategy is formulated against the backdrop of national purpose and national interests in light of the domestic and international environment. It reflects the enduring beliefs, values and ethics of the nation and provides a clear vision that is shared with or can be adopted by most citizens.<sup>13</sup> Nations generally prosper when they possess an effective grand strategy and falter when one is lacking because a grand strategy unites the efforts of the government and its citizens. Grand strategy must

include the ends, ways and means a state will use to satisfy its national interests. Ends refer to specific objectives. Ways are the methods or alternatives used for these objectives. Means refer to the resources applied.<sup>14</sup> In general terms, “strategy is fundamentally about choices; it reflects a preference for a future state or condition and determines how to best get there.”<sup>15</sup> Clausewitz might have best summarized the strategic process when he wrote, “Everything in strategy is very simple, but that does not mean that everything is very easy.”<sup>16</sup>

Britain’s balance of power strategy, begun under Elizabeth I (1558-1603)<sup>17</sup> and continued through the end of World War II, was an effective grand strategy. This strategy prevented any single nation from establishing supremacy over the continent of Europe and was viewed as crucial to Britain’s overall security. Successful implementation of this strategy enabled the rise to dominance of an island state over opponents having far greater populations, armies and natural resources. Britain’s navy gained prominence, her merchant economy blossomed and her empire was established by carefully balancing the relative power of her opponents. Winston Churchill described the British strategy as follows:

For four hundred years the foreign policy of England has been to oppose the strongest, most aggressive, most dominating Power on the Continent, and particularly to prevent the Low Countries from falling into the hands of such a Power...it would have been easy and must have been very tempting to join with the stronger power and share the fruits of his conquest. However, we always took the harder course, joined with the less strong Powers, made a combination among them, and thus defeated and frustrated the Continental military tyrant, whoever he was, whatever nation he led.<sup>18</sup>

“Manifest destiny,” Lincoln’s “preservation of the union” and Theodore Roosevelt’s “walk softly but carry a big stick” are articulations of successful U.S. grand strategies. Each provided strategic vision, purpose and a framework for implementing

policies to support these unwritten strategies. Public support of these grand strategies was crucial as the United States expanded westward to fulfill its perceived destiny, maintained national unity by force in the Civil War and established itself as a world power under Roosevelt's leadership. Barry Posen describes grand strategy as "a state's theory about how it can best cause security for itself."<sup>19</sup> Expansion and consolidation of the continent helped achieve this purpose as did Lincoln's preservation of the union and Roosevelt's larger and more powerful navy in support of American international trade.

Containment is a grand strategy familiar to most Americans. The term is attributed George F. Kennan and his famous "X-Article" published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1947 and refers to the U.S. strategy for dealing with the Soviet Union during the Cold War.<sup>20</sup> Kennan wrote that the U.S. strategy "must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies."<sup>21</sup> Kennan believed containment would "promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power."<sup>22</sup> Kennan's concept was given flesh in NSC 68. Perhaps the United States only written grand strategy, this document provided a strategic umbrella that encapsulated the United States' purpose and how the nation would act strategically for over 40 years.

Rather than engage in open warfare with the Soviet Union, a peer competitor and superpower, the United States countered the Soviet Union on the diplomatic, information, military and economic fronts. For example, American soldiers fought the Korean and Viet Nam wars to prevent the spread of communism. The United States provided support for insurgents against the Soviets in Afghanistan to blunt Soviet expansion into the Middle East. The United States engaged in these limited wars to

maintain an acceptable level of military and political stability globally. Neither nation was able to dominate the other militarily. The continued economic, diplomatic and military strain caused the eventual implosion of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Containment ceased as a viable strategy because the United States had no near-term peer competitor to contain. The search for a new strategic direction spanned the administrations of George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush but it failed because the nation lapsed into a strategic pause. No national consensus existed prior to 9-11, and following 9-11 national leadership has yet to develop a document equivalent to NSC 68 to provide a new grand strategic framework.

One can easily argue the United States has no grand strategy at the moment. Our National Security Strategy (NSS), sometimes referred to as grand strategy, is too limited in scope and time. Both the National Security Strategy of 2002 and its successor in 2006 established, then reconfirmed, the policy of preemption, often referred to as the “Bush Doctrine”. In the former, President George W. Bush stated “we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our rights of self defense by acting preemptively.”<sup>23</sup> In the latter, Bush stated “When the consequences of an attack with WMD are potentially so devastating, we cannot afford to stand idly by as grave dangers materialize... preemption in our national security strategy remains the same.”<sup>24</sup> Bush’s security policy proved controversial. It caused doubt and confusion among our allies and foes. The Bush Doctrine was seen as a form of primacy and was rejected broadly at home and in the international community. Equally important, neither of the Bush National Security Strategies captured the national purpose in the spirit of the time. It

could be argued they fail to understand the international realities and never even grasped the domestic component.

President Obama's inaugural address and early policy statements along with his first National Security Strategy will provide his intended strategic direction for the nation. True grand strategy transcends a single administration and serves as a guide for generations. Successful grand strategy garners and maintains support of the people, the government and the military. This fusion of national will and action over time is essential because there will always be challenges and setbacks. G. John Ikenberry classifies grand strategy as "positional" or "milieu" oriented. Under positional grand strategy "A great power seeks to counter, undercut, contain, and limit the power and threats of a specific challenger state or group of states; Nazi Germany, imperial Japan, the Soviet Bloc" whereas a "milieu grand strategy is one in which a great power does not target a specific state but seeks to structure its general international environment in ways that are congenial with its long-term security." His examples for implementing a milieu strategy are "building the infrastructure of international cooperation, promoting trade and democracy in various regions of the world, or establishing partnerships that might be useful for various contingencies."<sup>25</sup> The United States must forge a milieu type strategy to meet the challenges of the post Cold War and move the nation forward; a strategy which nobly follows England's example provided by Churchill of advancing the interests of one's nation while simultaneously advancing the well being of other nations. President Obama's Presidency is uniquely positioned to propose a milieu type grand strategy.



## Current and Potential Challenges

Development and implementation of effective U.S. grand strategy must consider existing and potential future world conditions. Considerations in crafting a new grand strategy include the international landscape of the post Cold War, globalization, the current world economic crisis, continuation of the global war on terror, the world view of America resulting from George W. Bush's presidency, domestic needs and other actors and factors - grand strategy is holistic in its outlook.

The end of the Cold War was a major transition point for mankind. New challenges emerged as the threat of thermonuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union diminished. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union was both a U.S. opponent and a stabilizing and restraining power among their allied nations. Soviet authority prevented smoldering ethnic and historical tensions among diverse populations from flaring into open conflict. Once that authority diminished, Europe experienced a host of internal conflicts, most notably in the Balkans. Nations across the globe, which had relied upon Soviet military support, sought new sources for weapons and aid. Natural balancing forces moved in to fill the void or perceived void left by the Soviets or the United States; the results often led to internal conflict.

New and challenging opportunities emerged for the United States and its allies as the Cold War ended. Our European allies used the "peace" to reduce the size of their military forces and to redirect their attention to economic matters. The 12 nation European Union established by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 had increased its membership to 15 nations by 1995 and to 27 nations by 2008. This union has improved the economic structure of Europe and positioned them for future changes in the world market. The United States pursued a similar peace dividend through gradual reductions

of its military following the First Gulf War and throughout the Clinton administration. The U.S. economy in the 1990's was robust as globalization continued to spread. Former Secretary of State James Baker, speaking about his participation in post Cold War U.S. strategy wrote:

Men like Truman and Acheson were above all, though we sometimes forget it, institution builders. They created NATO and the other security organizations that eventually won the Cold War. They fostered the economic institutions...that brought unparalleled prosperity...At a time of similar opportunity and risk; I believed we should take a leaf from their book.<sup>26</sup>

The events of 9/11 and post war Iraq have not altered the validity of Baker's advice. U.S. leadership is vital to address needed changes in the world's economy. The rise of Asia will result in a shifting of economic power eastward. The structure and membership of existing international financial institutions must be altered to adjust for these changes. The United Nations charter similarly requires modification to account for the new challenges of globalization, terrorism, peacekeeping and stabilization requirements. The international community must join to mitigate and reverse the impacts of climate change on the planet and its inhabitants. All these events call for the United States to take an active role and to show grand leadership.<sup>27</sup>

Globalization was created and is fueled by the movement of people, material, information and capital across national boundaries. The global economy transitioned from an agricultural, to an industrial and now to an informational base where goods and services are transferred at amazing speed among nations and continents. Local and regional markets have been replaced by global markets. Demographically the West is aging and depopulating while the East continues to expand and assume a greater role in economics. The United States is fortunate in that its population continues to grow at a

moderate rate while its economy remains adaptive. The U.S. economy is predicted to continue to surpass that of any other nation out to 2050. Despite these predictions, the United States must not become complacent in its view of globalization. The opportunity exists to exceed expectations and to create conditions which extend U.S. prosperity well beyond 2050.<sup>28</sup>

The current World economic crisis originated within the United States and will require cooperation among all the world's economies for its resolution. The United States must be seen as willing to adjust its mindset and policies to ensure the conditions which caused the crisis are not allowed to recur. These actions include infusion of state funding for ailing companies and banks in the near-term while making long-term changes to regulations and policing policies to prevent future transgressions. The government must guard against infusing itself into an economy which has served as the model for free enterprise throughout most of its history.

The "Global War on Terror" must end as the lexicon of U.S. national purpose and be replaced by policies to address state and non-state actors who use terrorism to advance their specific objectives directly. President George W. Bush seems to have understood this when he used the phrase struggle rather than war in December 2008: "the struggle against terror will be a generational conflict."<sup>29</sup> Acts of terrorism are clearly of concern for the United States and the west. More importantly, relations with the world's nearly 1.6 billion Muslims, one quarter of the global population, must not be jeopardized due to overreaction and misunderstanding.<sup>30</sup> The percentage of violent extremists in the Islamic community is small in comparison to the total population. Their reach and impact, however, can be significant. The attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> on the

World Trade Center demonstrate the destructive capability of what Stephen P. Lambert describes as a “revolutionary Islamic vanguard, with a goal nothing less than the complete transformation of the global status quo.”<sup>31</sup> This vanguard does not represent world Islamic sentiment as a “Global War on Terror” might suggest. The United States must seek to better understand the cultural mindset of Islamic populations to prevent recruitment efforts by violent extremists across the globe.

The next administration must undertake concerted efforts to restore U.S. moral integrity and legitimacy. The use of torture must be renounced and the question of habeas corpus rights for enemy combatants must be resolved. Guantanamo Bay must be removed as a symbol of U.S. illegitimate legal practices. Laurence Debot writes “U.S. policy and strategy have created a credibility gap between words and actions within the Muslim world.”<sup>32</sup> General David Petraeus provided new direction to U.S. forces when he wrote: “Adherence to our values distinguishes us from our enemy. This fight depends on securing the population, which must understand that we, not our enemies, occupy the moral high ground.”<sup>33</sup> These thoughts are echoed in the U.S. Army *Counterinsurgency* Field Manual which states, “Senior commanders must maintain the “moral high ground” in all their units’ deeds and words.”<sup>34</sup> G. John Ikenberry believes the United States will not be able to “depend on unipolar power or airtight borders” to ensure its security...“to operate in this coming world, the United States will need - more than anything else - authority and respect as a global leader.”<sup>35</sup> Cooperation with other nations in facing world-wide social, economic and military challenges will provide an opportunity for the United States to regain its authority and respect.

The legacy of President George W. Bush can be described as mixed at best. Bush had both the highest and lowest approval ratings of any president in history. Peaking at over 90% following the attacks of 9/11 and dipping below 20% in mid-2008, Bush left office with a rating of around 27%.<sup>36</sup> The Bush Doctrine, events following the invasion of Iraq, lingering concerns with Afghanistan and the growing world economic crisis combined to erode Bush's standing at home and abroad. His departure presents diplomatic opportunities for the new administration to show America's willingness to listen and build new partnerships. George W. Bush sought to spread democracy. While this goal may have been proper, the legitimacy of the effort was lost in the rhetoric and overtones of primacy. George W. Bush may in time be compared to another idealistic president. Woodrow Wilson also sought to use American influence and power for the benefit of all mankind. In a July 4<sup>th</sup> (1914) speech in Philadelphia, Wilson asked; "What are we going to do with the influence and power of this great nation? Are we going to play the old role of using that power for our aggrandizement and material benefit only?"<sup>37</sup> Clearly, these were not Wilson's intentions. He believed in cooperation with the international community and that America should be a role model and inspiration for mankind. His "dream" was that the world would see the United States as a nation which "puts human rights above all other rights and that her flag is the flag not only of America but of humanity."<sup>38</sup> Wilson espoused "the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life" and stated "the world must be made safe for democracy" in his War Address to the nation in 1917.<sup>39</sup> His Fourteen Points and advocacy for a League of Nations following World War I demonstrate Wilson's far reaching ideals and the frustration of turning visions into reality. The Fourteen Points served as a basis for peace but the

allies' final treaty sought to restrict and punish Germany, leading to World War II. The League of Nations was formed but the U.S. Senate declined to approve American entry into the League.<sup>40</sup> Yet at the end of World War II, Wilson's vision was pursued within the United Nations and the Cold War provided the opportunity for it to be realized with the American inspired economic and political order. Both Bush and Wilson can take solace in the latter's statement regarding personal choice and public popularity, "The most patriotic man...is sometimes the man who goes in the direction that he thinks right even when he sees half the world against him. It is the dictate of patriotism to sacrifice yourself if you think that that is the path of honor and duty."<sup>41</sup>

President Bush made significant gains for the United States in the international community despite negative press coverage and diminished public opinion. In an article recommending direction for the new president, Richard Haass wrote that President Bush "leaves behind a good deal you can build on: programs to combat HIV/AIDS around the world, diplomatic efforts in the Middle East, a strategic breakthrough with India, important consultative arrangements with China and a good relationship with Brazil, increasingly the anchor of a centrist bloc of South American countries."<sup>42</sup>

The challenging opportunities described above highlight the value of a U.S. grand strategy to focus this nation and the international community on a new vision and goals leading to a better future for all. NSC 68 noted that "Our position as the center of power in the free world places a heavy responsibility on the United States for leadership. We must organize and enlist the energies and resources of the free world in a positive program for peace."<sup>43</sup> Any new strategy must recognize that only the United

States retains the power to shape a better future for all and must find a way to bring others with us.

### The Art of the Possible

Grand strategy is often compressed into a single phrase, a bumper sticker. Such an approach would appear to make the concepts clear and understandable to a broad audience. Several such words and phrases were noted previously in this article: containment, balance of power, primacy, neo-isolationism and others. George Kennan who first introduced the term “containment” in 1947, was asked in the 1990’s to assist President Clinton’s administration in determining a new grand strategy. Having watched his containment strategy be used to justify actions which he had never intended, Kennan recommended against a bumper sticker and proposed instead a “thoughtful paragraph or two.”<sup>44</sup> Following Kennan’s advice and understanding the need for brevity in a world dominated by sound bites, this paper presents both.

The United States should adopt a grand strategy of “diplomacy and cooperation first.” Elaborating on this short description, the United States must immediately communicate its intentions to use diplomacy as a primary means for building cooperative partnerships across the globe that improve prospects for all while serving U.S. interests as well. This grand strategy blends cooperative security and selective engagement. The United States reserves the right to protect itself and its vital interests under this strategy but seeks first to obtain solutions through diplomacy and cooperative actions. Our interests will not always match that of others. Diplomacy and cooperation facilitates a better understanding of other nations’ interests and their understanding of our interests. The United States need not withdraw from its historic support of life, liberty

and the pursuit of happiness for its people or the rights of free nations and mankind, but it pursues these collaboratively.

Any new grand strategy must address four key objectives. These are to: promote regional stability and security, expand globalization, mitigate and reverse climate change and limit the impacts of terrorism and anti-globalization forces. These objectives are common to other nations, many of whom would welcome an America reaching out to them as cooperative partners. Richard N. Haass recently made the following recommendation to the new administration: "We need to bring other major powers into the design and operation of the world - before the century is overwhelmed by the forces globalization has unleashed...many of today's powers understand that they will either cooperate with one another or pay a steep price."<sup>45</sup>

"Diplomacy and cooperation first" articulates the U.S. desire to understand regional and global situations and enables the use of all elements of national power. Understanding that none of our objectives will be met by a single element of power, it is useful to examine the diplomatic, informational, military and economic elements of power and their potential use in achieving specific national objectives.

Diplomatic power is instrumental in building and maintaining regional stability and security. Russia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, Iran, Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Mexico and Brazil are but a few of the nations with the potential to alter the balance of power in their regional domains. The European Union, as a block of nations, has similar potential. U.S. national security is and will remain dependent upon regional balances of power. Of late, near unilateral U.S. military power has been used predominantly to ensure stability and security, rather than allowing time for diplomacy to persuade other



nations to act in concert with the United States. Theodore Roosevelt's big stick strategy was borrowed from an old African proverb: "Speak softly and carry a big stick, and you will go far."<sup>46</sup> The statement demonstrated American resolve and made other nations think twice about how they should engage the United States. It was a diplomatic tool internationally and a way to rally domestic support for strengthening the U.S. Navy.<sup>47</sup> Roosevelt did not advocate the military element of power as his first choice, nor should the United States today. Speaking persuasively is a strength that needs to be enhanced. The United States has weakened its diplomatic arsenal through reductions of U.S. State Department capabilities following the end of the Cold War. This trend must be reversed, but in concert with improvements in the use of all the instruments of power.

Climate change and acts of terrorism impact all nations to some degree. Informational power can be used to educate, describe current or future risks and to promote actions to address both climate change and terrorism. The informational element of power provides a tool for spreading values and ideals. One of the historical strengths of the United States has been its openness toward and respect for world opinion. Our first official act, the Declaration of Independence, provides evidence. The founding fathers believed it necessary to write "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation" and further to add "let Facts be submitted to a candid world" as they made their case to King George and the world "That these united Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States."<sup>48</sup> No greater need exists today than for the world to again hear the United States clearly proclaim its goals and aspirations and demonstrate by our actions we truly believe in the rights and well being of all mankind.

President Harry S. Truman in his first address to Congress in 1945 emphasized; “The responsibility of the great states is to serve and not to dominate the world. To build a foundation of enduring peace we must not only work in harmony with our friends abroad, but we must have the united support of our own people.”<sup>49</sup>

David M. Kennedy more recently cites two primary tasks for American foreign policy, “to rebuild the nation’s role and reputation as a lawful and legitimate leader in the global community and to restore the American people’s ownership of the purpose, efficacy, and justice of their country’s continuing international engagement.”<sup>50</sup> Climate change and terrorism are national objectives requiring such leadership. The last paragraph in Kennan’s X-Article provides a fitting bit of advice to the American public in its support of any grand strategy, “Providence which, by providing the American people with this implacable challenge, has made their entire security as a nation dependent on their pulling themselves together and accepting the responsibilities of moral and political leadership that history plainly intended them to bear.”<sup>51</sup> Richard Haass recommends the new administration should “think of the Oval Office as a classroom, and explain to the American people what we need to accomplish and what it will require.”<sup>52</sup> As the president teaches the nation, he will also be sending a strong informational message to the world.

An appropriate new grand strategy would enable the United States and its cooperative partners to promote regional stability and security and to address the military aspects of confronting terrorism. Recent conflicts have demonstrated U.S. military dominance against peer competitors and have equally proven our reach is not without limits. Diplomacy and cooperation first promotes military participation from other

nations in regional conflicts and other military undertakings, in efforts to return failed and failing states to good governance or to provide military support to global areas of concern such as piracy or natural disasters. Existing alliances must be strengthened and expanded; a fact supported by public opinion regarding the NATO alliance.<sup>53</sup> A world public opinion poll in 2007 found that “publics around the world reject the idea that the United States should play the role of preeminent world leader... (yet) majorities in most countries want the United States to participate in international efforts to address world problems.”<sup>54</sup> This apparent contradiction points to a desire to have the United States cooperate with other nations, not act unilaterally. Not surprisingly, “Americans largely agree with the rest of the world.”<sup>55</sup>

Economic power is crucial to the objective of expanding globalization. The economic growth made possible in large part by the actions at Breton Woods and the Marshall Plan finally ended Europe’s propensity for war. David Kennedy attributed the Breton Wood institutions with leading the economic expansion now referred to as globalization and noted that “barbarous, bloody Europe was pacified after centuries of conflict.”<sup>56</sup> Kennedy also recommends the United States should “aim to update and strengthen the carefully constructed framework of multilateral institutions and practices that has served so well for so long”...namely, the United States should “engage and lead once again in such institutions as the UN, the IMF and the World Bank, and yes, the International Criminal Court, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Doha Round of trade liberalization talks, and the Kyoto Protocol.”<sup>57</sup> Current demographics and economic models show a shifting of power from west to east in the coming decades. If these projections hold true, John Ikenberry and Charles Kupchan claim the result could

be that “the scope of American primacy will wane as the century progresses” and that “the ultimate objective should be to channel rising centers of power into cooperative partnerships with the United States”.<sup>58</sup> Rather than worry about the rise of China it would be better to encourage its participation in international institutions and engage it in partnerships with the United States. These actions support the national interests of both nations. As David Kennedy cites, “a China willingly bound to multilateral norms is surely preferable to a China willingly asserting itself unilaterally.”<sup>59</sup> Globalization’s expansion must also ensure smaller nations are able to grow, prosper and take their place among what Thomas Barnett calls the “functioning core nations,” nations fully connected to globalization and its benefits.<sup>60</sup> An expanding economic environment enables diplomacy and cooperation to flourish and supports a world in which the United States and its values advance.

Implementation of this new grand strategy of “Diplomacy and cooperation first” must be grounded in the domestic environment, in understanding that “the ultimate source of strategy lies in the values of the people of a nation.”<sup>61</sup> Further, the domestic environment for the United States must consider that “in a democracy, the viability of policy and strategy is ultimately vested in the people.”<sup>62</sup> U.S. grand strategy, to be successful must be theoretically sound (suitable) and both feasible and acceptable to the domestic audience, the citizens who choose their elected officials. Improvements in education, health care, industrial capacity, business opportunities and other domestic concerns which can be directly linked to a grand strategy of “diplomacy and cooperation first” will enhance support for and the longevity of the strategy. Linkages to the strategy are made by showing success in achieving the objectives listed previously (expansion

of globalization, stability and security, reduced climatic change and its impacts, and a reduction of terrorist activities and anti-globalization forces) and the positive results these objectives have on the U.S. domestic environment. Two examples of this linkage might be: to demonstrate specific cases where improved educational performance of its students has made the United States more competitive globally or to highlight new business opportunities for United States firms resulting from improved security and stability in areas formerly troubled by regional unrest. Successful implementation of and grand strategy requires tangible improvement in the domestic environment to sustain the national will for the new grand strategy.

### Conclusion

“Diplomacy and cooperation first” is a grand strategy appropriately focusing America’s elements of power to achieve specific objectives in support of our national interests in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It enables the United States to lead from a position of moral and political strength by making clear to other nations our respect for their national interests in an approach that benefits all. This grand strategy considers the value of each of the intellectual templates of strategy at the national level and the proper role of grand strategy in directing a nation’s vision for its future. It is advocated in the knowledge that nations prosper under a successful grand strategy and languish in its absence. The United States must not shrink from a vision of itself as a world leader and world power diplomatically, economically and militarily. “Diplomacy and cooperation first” facilitates continued U.S. prosperity and world influence through an enhanced understanding and consideration for existing and future global conditions. The United States must recognize the changing nature of the global environment and use its

influence and power to achieve specific objectives in support of its national interests that enhance the well being of all. It must also improve and shape its domestic environment to sustain U.S. power and the national will for this new grand strategy. Successful application of this grand strategy would advance our national interests and those of all mankind. Such an undertaking is clearly within the art of the possible.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Department of National Security and Strategy, Course Directive AY2009: *National Security Policy and Strategy* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2008), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional: Strategic Thinking and Strategy Formulation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008), 89-91.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> George W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2002/nss.pdf> and National Security Strategy of the United States of America, March 2006, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/nss2006.pdf> (both accessed December 30, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> George Washington, "Washington's Farewell Address to the People of the United States," September 1796, <http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/senate/farewell/sd106-21.pdf> (accessed March 1, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Robert Dallek, "Historian Robert Dallek on Lend-Lease," [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/32\\_f\\_roosevelt/filmmore/ra\\_lendlease.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/32_f_roosevelt/filmmore/ra_lendlease.html) (accessed March 1, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Benjamin J. Cohen, "Bretton Woods System," <http://www.polsci.ucsb.edu/faculty/cohen/inpress/bretton.html> (accessed March 1, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> National Security Council, "NSC-68, A Report to the National Security Council," April 14, 1950 <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm> (accessed March 1, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> The White House, "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement," February 1996, <http://www.fas.org/spp/military/docops/national/1996stra.htm#preface> (accessed March 1, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Center for Defense Information, "U.S. Military deployments/engagements 1975-2001," <http://www.cdi.org/issues/USForces/deployments.html> (accessed March 1, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 89-91.

<sup>12</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 605.

<sup>13</sup> Department of National Security and Strategy, Course Directive AY2009, 3-5.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 17.

<sup>16</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 178.

<sup>17</sup> Britannia History, "Elizabeth I (1558-1603), A Queen with the Heart of a King," <http://www.britannia.com/history/monarchs/mon45.html> (accessed March 1, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Winston Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (New York: Bantam, 1961), 186-187.

<sup>19</sup> Barry Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 13.

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Kennan and Containment, 1947," <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/cwr/17601.htm> (accessed March 1, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> George F. Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct-X," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947, 3, <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19470701faessay25403-p50/x/the-sources-of-soviet-conduct.html> (accessed December 28, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>23</sup> George W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002.

<sup>24</sup> George W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, March 2006, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/nss2006.pdf> (accessed December 20, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> G. John Ikenberry, "Liberal Order Building," in *To Lead The World, American Strategy After The Bush Doctrine*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 87.

<sup>26</sup> James A. Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace, 1989-1992* (New York: Putman, 1995), 605-606.

<sup>27</sup> Ikenberry, "Liberal Order Building," 100-107.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas P.M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map, War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century* (New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2004), 206-214.

<sup>29</sup> Agence France-Presse (AFP), "War on Terror a Generational Conflict, Bush Says," December 17, 2008, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ha1zCIBiRGbw4nr3PXs3VKO9JkGg> (accessed December 29, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> Muslim Population Worldwide, [http://www.islamicpopulation.com/world\\_general.html](http://www.islamicpopulation.com/world_general.html) (accessed March 1, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Stephen P. Lambert, *Y: The Sources of Islamic Revolutionary Conduct*, (Washington, D.C. : Joint Military Intelligence College, Center for Strategic Intelligence Research, 2005), 159.

<sup>32</sup> Laurence Andrew Debot, "The Global War on Terrorism: A Religious War?", Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, <http://www.terrorisminfo.mipt.org/pdf/6557-global-war-on-terrorism-religious-war.pdf> (accessed December 30, 2008).

<sup>33</sup> David H. Petraeus, "Commanding General David H. Petraeus' Letter about Value" (May 10, 2007), [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/army/other/petraeus\\_values-msg\\_torture070510.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/army/other/petraeus_values-msg_torture070510.htm) (accessed December 30, 2008).

<sup>34</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency*, Filed Manual 3-24 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, December 15, 2006), 7-2.

<sup>35</sup> Ikenberry, "Liberal Order Building," 107.

<sup>36</sup> Roper Center Public Opinion Archives, "Presidential Approval Ratings," [http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data\\_access/data/presidential\\_approval.html](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/data/presidential_approval.html) and The Wall Street Journal, "How the Presidents Stack Up, George W. Bush," <http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/info-presapp0605-31.html> (accessed March 1, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, The American Presidency Project, Woodrow Wilson address at Liberty Hall, "The Meaning of Liberty" <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=65381> (accessed December 29, 2008).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Woodrow Wilson biography, "Woodrow Wilson, The Nobel Peace Prize 1919," [http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/1919/wilson-bio.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1919/wilson-bio.html) (accessed December 29, 2008).

<sup>41</sup> Woolley and Peters, "The Meaning of Liberty."

<sup>42</sup> Richard N. Haass, "The World That Awaits," *Newsweek*, November 3, 2008, 31.

<sup>43</sup> "NSC-68."

<sup>44</sup> James M. Goldgeier, Whitney Shepardson and Derek H. Chollet, "Kennan had a Vision. Things Aren't So Clear Now," July 14, 2008, [http://www.cfr.org/publication/16773/kennan\\_had\\_a\\_vision\\_things\\_arent\\_so\\_clear\\_now.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/16773/kennan_had_a_vision_things_arent_so_clear_now.html) (accessed December 30, 2008).

<sup>45</sup> Haass, "The World That Awaits," 31.

<sup>46</sup> Josh Cracraft, "Theodore Roosevelt 1901-1909: Big Stick Diplomat and Peacemaker," <http://www.sparknotes.com/biography/troosevelt/section9.rhtml> (accessed December 27, 2008).



<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Independence Hall Association, "The Declaration of Independence, The Want, Will, and Hopes of the People," <http://www.ushistory.org/Declaration/document/index.htm> (accessed December 27, 2008).

<sup>49</sup> Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, Harry S. Truman, "First Speech to Congress," April 16, 1945, <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3339?print> (accessed December 29, 2008).

<sup>50</sup> David M. Kennedy, "Two Concepts of Sovereignty", in *To Lead The World, American Strategy After The Bush Doctrine*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 157.

<sup>51</sup> Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct-X," 6.

<sup>52</sup> Haass, "The World That Awaits," 31.

<sup>53</sup> Public Diplomacy Alumni Association, "Europeans favor Obama presidency; Americans and Europeans share concerns on terrorism, international economy, Russia," September 10, 2008, <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/92.htm#sept2008> (accessed March 1, 2009).

<sup>54</sup> World Public Opinion: Global Public Opinion on International Affairs, "World Publics Reject US Role as the World Leader," April 17, 2007, [http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/views\\_on\\_countriesregions\\_bt/345.php?nid=&id=&pnt=345&lb=btvoc](http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/views_on_countriesregions_bt/345.php?nid=&id=&pnt=345&lb=btvoc) (accessed December 29, 2008).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Kennedy, "Two Concepts of Sovereignty," 166.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>58</sup> G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, "Liberal Realism: The Foundations of a Democratic Foreign Policy," *National Interest*, 77 (Fall 2004), 38.

<sup>59</sup> Kennedy, "Two Concepts of Sovereignty," 169.

<sup>60</sup> Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map*, 4.

<sup>61</sup> Henry E. Eccles, "Strategy-Theory and Application," *Naval War College Review* 32 (May/June 1979), 13.

<sup>62</sup> Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 86.

